

REMARKS

Claims 45-48 and 50-54 are pending. Claims 45, 48, 50, and 54 have been amended in this response. Support for these amendments can be found, *inter alia*, in Figures 5 and 6 of the original application. No claims have been canceled, and no new claims have been added. Claims 45-48 and 50-54 therefore will be pending upon entry of the above amendments.

Claim 54 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. patent no. 5,643,018 ("the Sakai patent"). Claims 45-48 and 50-53 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over the Sakai patent.

Claim 45 has been amended to recite a flexible contact element at least partially disposed within the contact section and retained by the contact section so that opposing freestanding ends of the flexible contact element can move in relation to the contact section.

The Examiner has characterized the contact plate (4) of the receptor portion (1A) of the Sakai patent as a contact element as recited in claim 45 of the present application. Office action at pg. 8, first figure. The contact plate (4) adjoins the bottom wall (1) of the receptor portion (1A), as shown in Figure 2 of the Sakai patent. The contact plate (4) therefore is not freestanding, in contradistinction to the contact element recited in claim 45 of the present application. Applicant therefore respectfully submits that claim 45, as amended herein, is patentably distinct from the Sakai patent.

Claim 45 has also been amended to recite wherein . . . the first set of walls is positioned between one of the freestanding ends of the flexible contact and the insertion pathway.

The Examiner has characterized the front ends (2b) of the receptor portion (1A) of the Sakai patent as a first set of walls as recited in claim 45 of the present application. Office action at pg. 7, first and second figures. The front ends (2b) are not positioned between an end of the contact plate (4) and a pathway defined by the front ends (2b), in contradistinction to the first set of walls recited in claim 45 of the present application. Applicant therefore respectfully submits that claim 45, as amended herein, is patentably distinct from the Sakai patent for this additional reason.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 45 (and claims 46 and 47, which depend therefrom) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested.

Claim 48 has been amended to recite the flexible contact element including a freestanding leading edge that is . . . separated from the insertion pathway by the first set of walls. The Sakai patent neither teaches nor suggests these limitations, for substantially the same reasons discussed above in relation to claim 45. Applicant therefore respectfully submits that claim 48, as amended herein, is patentably distinct from the Sakai patent.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 48 (and claims 50 and 51, which depend therefrom) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested.

Claim 52 has been amended to recite the flexible contact element including an unconstrained leading edge that is positioned within the space on an opposite side of the first set of walls from the insertion pathway.

The contact plate (4) of the receptor portion (1A) of the Sakai patent adjoins the bottom wall (1) of the receptor portion (1A), as shown in Figure 2 of the Sakai patent. The contact plate (4) is thus constrained by the bottom wall (1), in contradistinction to the contact element recited in amended claim 52 of the present application. Applicant therefore respectfully submits that claim 52, as amended herein, is patentably distinct from the Sakai patent.

Moreover, the Sakai patent neither teaches nor suggests a flexible contact element including a leading edge that is positioned within a space on an opposite side of a first set of walls from an insertion pathway, for substantially the same reasons discussed above in relation to claim 45. Applicant therefore respectfully submits that claim 52, as amended herein, is patentably distinct from the Sakai patent for this additional reason.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 52 (and claim 53, which depends therefrom) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested.

Claim 54 has been amended to recite wherein . . . one of the unconstrained ends of the flexible contact element is isolated from the insertion pathway by the set of converging walls. Applicant respectfully submits that the Sakai patent neither teaches nor suggests these limitations, for substantially the same reasons discussed above in relation to claims 45 and 52.

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Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 54 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) is respectfully requested.

A notice of allowability is respectfully requested.

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